

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

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SUBJECT: WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE

FOLLOWING IS THE ARTICLE BY DAN MORGAN, WASHINGTON POST
STAFF WRITER, WHICH APPEARED ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE
WASHINGTON POST, JANUARY 10, 1974 WITH FIVE COLUMN
HEADLINE "U.S.-PANAMA AGREE TO RETURN OF CANAL AND ZONE."

1. BEGIN QUOTE: THE UNITED STATES AND PANAMA HAVE
AGREED IN PRINCIPLE FOR THE FIRST TIME TO BRING AN END
TO AMERICAN JURISDICTION OVER THE 53 MILE-LONG PANAMA
CANAL AT SOME TO-BE-DETERMINED DATE, GOVERNMENT SOURCES
DISCLOSED YESTERDAY.

2. "ALTHOUGH THE AGREEMENT IS ONLY PRELIMINARY, OFFICIALS
DESCRIBED IT AS A MAJOR STEP TOWARD A FINAL RESOLUTION
OF THE PANAMA CANAL QUESTION, WHICH HAS STUMPED NEGO-
TIATORS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES FOR 10 YEARS.

3. "PERHAPS NOT ENTIRELY BY COINCIDENCE, THE AGREEMENT
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CAME ON THE EVE OF THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF ANTI-AMERICAN

RIOTS IN PANAMA WHICH SPOTLIGHTED THE ISSUE AS A
POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS PROBLEM FOR U.S. DIPLOMACY.

4. "THE PRELIMINARY ACCORD WAS CONCLUDED BY U.S. ROVING
AMBASSADOR ELLSWORTH BUNKER AND PANAMANIAN FOREIGN

MINISTER JUAN ANTONIO TACK. BUNKER RETURNED TO
WASHINGTON FROM PANAMA CITY TUESDAY NIGHT AFTER A
41-HOUR VISIT.

5. "GOVERNMENT SOURCES SAID THE ACCORD SPELLS OUT A
BROAD COMMON STANDPOINT ON MOST BASIC ISSUES, FOR USE
BY NEGOTIATORS WHO ARE EXPECTED TO SPEND MONTHS DRAFTING
A FINAL AGREEMENT TO REPLACE THE 1903 PANAMA CANAL
TREATY.

6. "U.S. OFFICIALS WITHHELD THE CONTENTS OF THE AGREE-
MENTS, BUT THEY INDICATED THAT THE PRINCIPLES COVER SUCH
ISSUES AS PANAMANIAN SOVEREIGNTY, AMERICAN PAYMENTS
TO PANAMA IN FUTURE YEARS, DEFENSE OF THE CANAL, AND THE
POSSIBILITY OF BUILDING A SECOND, WIDER CANAL TO
ACCOMMODATE LARGE TANKERS.

7. "NO DATE FOR AN EVENTUAL TRANSFER OF THE CANAL TO
PANAMA HAS EVER BEEN SPECIFIED AND OFFICIALS BELIEVE
THIS DATE IS YEARS AWAY STILL.

8. "IT WAS UNDERSTOOD THAT MORE DETAILS MIGHT BE
ANNOUNCED AFTER OTHER AGENCIES IN WASHINGTON WITH AN
INTEREST IN THE CANAL, SUCH AS THE COMMERCE DEPARTMENT,
THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL AND THE PENTAGON, HAVE HAD
A CHANCE TO REVIEW THE PRELIMINARY ACCORD.

9. "U.S. OFFICIALS HAVE ALREADY DESCRIBED THE 1903
PANAMA CANAL TREATY AS AN ANACRONISM. AMONG OTHER
THINGS, IT GAVE THE UNITED STATES JURISDICTION OVER THE
533-SQUARE MILE CANAL ZONE 'IN PERPETUITY.' TODAY THE
ZONE IS AN AMERICAN ENCLAVE IN THE HEART OF LATIN
AMERICA. TO MANY PERSONS IN THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE,
IT SYMBOLIZES YANKEE ENCROACHMENT.
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10. "LAST YEAR, THE UNITED STATES AGREED THAT THE 1903
TREATY SHOULD BE REPLACED BY A NEW ONE THAT REJECTS THE
CONCEPT OF PERMANENT AMERICAN SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE ZONE,
WHICH HAS A POPULATION OF MORE THAN 44,000 AMERICANS.
THE UNITED STATES TOOK THE POSITION THAT THE ZONE SHOULD
BE ABOLISHED, EXCEPT FOR A SMALL AREA NEEDED BY THE
UNITED STATES TO OPERATE AND DEFEND THE CANAL. IT ALSO

AGREED THAT AMERICAN CRIMINAL AND CIVIL JURISDICTION IN THE ZONE SHOULD BE DROPPED.

11. "ACCORDING TO AMERICAN OFFICIALS, THE PRACTICAL QUESTIONS OF IMPLEMENTING AN AGREEMENT ARE VEXING. SOME 5,000 OF THE 15,000 EMPLOYEES OF THE PANAMA CANAL CO.,

A U.S. GOVERNMENT AGENCY, ARE AMERICANS.

12. "SOME AMERICANS LIVING THERE HAVE GRANDPARENTS WHO LIVED AND WORKED THERE. MANY OF THE THIRD GENERATION RESIDENTS FEEL THAT THEIR HOME IS A PART OF THE UNITED STATES.

13. "U.S. OFFICIALS SAID A LONG TRANSITIONAL PERIOD FROM AMERICAN TO PANAMANIAN SOVEREIGNTY WOULD BE NECESSARY. SOME SOURCES SAID YESTERDAY THAT THE LENGTH OF THIS PERIOD COULD DEPEND IN PART ON WHETHER A SECOND, OR EVEN THIRD CANAL FROM THE CARIBBEAN TO THE PACIFIC IS BUILT. STUDIES OF THIS POSSIBILITY ARE IN THE PRELIMINARY STAGES IN PANAMA AND NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES.

14. "GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS SAID YESTERDAY THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS INDICATED IT IS PREPARED TO INCREASE DRASTICALLY THE TOKEN ANNUITY IT PAYS TO PANAMA FOR THE CANAL, FROM THE FIGURE OF SOMEWHAT MORE THAN \$1 MILLION TO OVER \$20 MILLION.

15. "IN A CONCESSION TO PANAMANIAN NEGOTIATORS, THE WHITE HOUSE ANNOUNCED LAST WEEK PLANS TO SEEK LEGISLATION THAT WOULD CEDE TWO AIRFIELDS IN THE CANAL ZONE TO PANAMA. END QUOTE. KISSINGER

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